

# **ORM NEWS**

**From the Office of the  
Deputy Assistant Secretary for  
Resolution Management  
Department of Veterans Affairs**



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June 2003

*From the Deputy Assistant Secretary*



## **Fiscal Year 2004 and Beyond**

I want to discuss where I'd like to see us at the beginning of fiscal year 2004. We have made great strides in the past two years to realign some aspects of ORM. Part of this realignment included reducing our FTE by 30 positions. We incorporated new programs to address the needs of our customers, improved our core services and focused on the core competencies required to deliver "world class" complaint processing.

We also gained a reputation as a "can do" organization when it comes to EEO complaint processing and have taken a leading role in VA's efforts to expand the use of mediation to resolve workplace disputes.

One of our primary goals is to reach the EEOC standard of completing investigations within 180 days and reduce or eliminate our backlog of cases older than 180 days prior to the end of this fiscal year. This is a collaborative effort for ORM and involves the initiatives already underway to address this issue and the continual efforts of everyone involved in processing EEO complaints. The elimination of the backlog and the reduction in our processing time to 180 days or less are two "must do" initiatives. The elimination of the backlog of cases older than 180 days will help improve our timeliness and will enable us to focus all of our resources on more current cases, where they should be. We are working towards achieving this goal before the beginning of fiscal year 2004.

You may ask why it is important to reduce the timeliness of investigations to 180 days or less. Please keep in mind that the real issue is the timely resolution of complaints. If you or I were involved in a complaint we would want the issue resolved as quickly as possible, we owe no less to the employees who come to us for assistance. Timely resolution, whether achieved through investigation, mediation or other methods used to reach a settlement, is better for all involved parties because it allows them to return their full focus to providing services, either directly or indirectly, to veterans.

The key to achieving the goals outlined above and the basis for our past accomplishments is teamwork. Each of you plays an important part in what we do and your input is crucial to our success. I want us to build on our past accomplishments and I encourage you to share with me your best ideas on ways we can continue to improve our services.

James S. Jones

***Articles in this month's edition of ORM News include:***

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## **What it Means to be a Counselor**

**By Charlotte Barr, EEO Counselor  
Little Rock Field Office**

- C – Caring; Concerned**
- O – Offers No Opinions**
- U – Understanding**
- N – Neutral; Negotiator – Referee**
- S – Sensitive; Service Oriented**
- E – Educator – provides information on the EEO process and the law**
- L – Listener – effectively listens to gather pertinent information**
- O – Outstanding Report Writing**
- R – Resolution Oriented – We get results early in the process at the lowest level, saving money and resources**

# Program Highlights

## **“What Exactly Does that Office of Policy and Compliance Do Anyway?”**

The Office of Policy and Compliance (OPC) is starting a new column entitled *What Exactly does that Office of Policy and Compliance Do Anyway?* Each month we will address various topics of interest to you that are handled by our office. The following, *Noncompliance with an Agency Final Order*, is the first topic we will discuss.

An agency final order, also referred to as a Petition for Enforcement, outlines the remedies to correct a finding of discrimination issued by the Office of Employment Discrimination Complaint Adjudication (OEDCA) or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). OEDCA renders agency final orders if they find discrimination after the EEO investigation has been completed and the complainant has not requested an EEOC hearing. If OEDCA finds no discrimination they then issue a Final Agency Decision (FAD). OEDCA may also render an agency final order when an EEOC Administrative Judge (AJ) has recommended a finding of discrimination after holding a hearing, and OEDCA agrees with the AJ's findings. (If OEDCA does not agree with the AJ's recommendation finding discrimination, an agency appeal is filed). EEOC renders final orders where discrimination is found after processing appeals from the complainant or agency. Appeals will be addressed in a future article.

When a complainant raises allegations that the agency has not complied with a final order rendered by OEDCA or EEOC, they should be referred to the Office of Policy and Compliance (OPC). The complainant should be advised to put their concerns in writing and mail or fax them to the attention of the Chief, Policy and Compliance. Our address and fax number are:

**Address:** Office of Resolution Management  
Chief, Policy and Compliance (08B)  
810 Vermont Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20420  
**Fax:** (202) 501-2811

*\*Please do not instruct complainants to email their concerns!*

Allegations that the agency has failed to comply with a final order should not be processed as a new EEO complaint, even if the complainant insists they want to do so. OPC will address each issue raised by the complainant and if any issues are determined not to be related to compliance with the final order, the complainant will be advised to contact the local ORM field office to pursue processing those specific issues as subsequent acts of discrimination. If the complainant wishes to pursue these issues, the field office should use the date the complainant raised their allegations of noncompliance with OPC as the date of initial contact.

If you have questions or are just not sure about a particular situation that may arise at your field office, please contact OPC prior to processing a new EEO complaint. *Michelle McNeill, Office of Policy and Compliance*

## Training Needs Analysis



You may be asked in the future to complete a survey or participate in an interview, the results of which may be used in conducting a *training needs analysis*. A training needs analysis is a three-step diagnostic tool used by Learning Resources to analyze employee performance to determine ORM's organizational training needs. The first step of the needs analysis is to determine the "gap" between actual performance and desired performance. The second step is to determine the reason for the "gap": lack of knowledge or skill; unreasonable standards; lack of feedback; poor working conditions; improper measurements; lack of motivation and/or capacity may be the reason. The third and final step is to determine the proper remedy—training may not always be the answer.

It is well acknowledged that one of the most important steps in training development is conducting a training needs analysis.

The information you will be asked to provide will be used to help Learning Resources develop and deliver training targeted to your needs and the needs of ORM as an organization.

For additional information, please contact Learning Resources at (727) 319-1232.

*Lewis "Lew" Henson, Learning Resources Officer*



## **The VA Workforce “A Snapshot of VA Employees”**

The following information on the current makeup of VA's workforce comes from the Office of Human Resources and Management (OHRM) and can be found on its Workforce and Succession Planning web site.

- Currently VA employees more than 220,000 employees and is the second largest agency in the Federal government.
- VA has facilities in all 50 states, its territories, and the District of Columbia and provides services and benefits through 10 major business lines.
- The delivery of services is accomplished through our 173 medical centers, ambulatory and community-based outpatient clinics, 206 vet centers, 57 regional offices, more than 24 military discharge centers, and 119 national cemeteries.
- VA employs over 13, 000 physicians and 48,500 nurses, practical nurses, and licensed practical nurses who are highly trained and dedicated to providing top quality health care to veterans and their families.
- VA employs approximately 3,700 Veterans Claims Examiners, Service Representatives and 500 Loan Specialists.
- More than 1,200 national cemetery employees are committed to maintain our national cemeteries.
- 57% of VA employees are women.
- 24% of VA employees are African Americans.
- 12% of VA employees are of other minority race/national origin.
- 44% of the workforce is over 50 years of age.
- 17% of the workforce is 30-39 years old.
- 37% of the workforce will be eligible to retire as of September 2005.

For more information on VA's Workforce, visit OHRM's Web site at <http://vaww.va.gov/vaworkforceplanning>.

## **The Next Generation**



Several studies have shown that Federal service has become less attractive to the younger workforce. To address this “human capital crisis” and to understand how to attract, retain, and develop a younger workforce, the Office of Workforce Planning established the *Next Generation Work Group* to solicit the views of some of VA’s younger workers concerning recruitment, retention, and development issues that face the Department, particularly for younger workers. The group consisted of 13 highly motivated, enthusiastic participants from all over the Department.

The group presented its findings and recommendations to VA’s Strategic Management Council. Recommendations from this group included:

- Create a VA Young Professional Association.
- Develop a national marketing campaign to improve the image of VA.
- Develop a centralized, national recruitment and marketing program.
- Develop a centralized professional development program.
- Improve VA compensation and benefits.
- Create a performance-based organization.



The Office of Workforce Planning will incorporate these ideas into VA’s workforce planning efforts, particularly as it rolls out a Departmental recruitment and marketing initiative.

The Office of Workforce Planning will also continue to ask for input from employees throughout the Department to obtain their ideas on how to ensure the VA maintains a high quality, diverse staff to serve our Nation’s veterans.

You can view the findings of the *Next Generation Workgroup* and share your ideas on how to further this effort by visiting the Workforce and Succession Planning Web site at

<http://vaww.va.gov/vaworkforceplanning/nextgen.htm>.

*Terry Washington, ORM External Affairs*

## **EEO Counselor Conference Calls**

The EEO Counselor's Conference Call is scheduled for the 1st & 3rd Thursday of each month @ 2:00 p.m. EST for 80 minutes. The dial in number is 1-800-767-1850. The name of the call is *EEO Conference Call*. The Access Code is 50746. Press \*0 and ask the operator for additional time if needed.

The first call is scheduled for Thursday, July 17, 2003.

Contact Shalisa D. Fountain, EEO Assistant, Little Rock Field Office at (501) 257-1581 for more information.

## **IT Help Desk Reminder**

ALL requests for IT assistance and support should be directed to the ORM Help Desk, not directly to ORM ITS staff personnel. These procedures were implemented for two reasons: (1) performance monitoring and (2) quality support to ORM personnel. Logging requests for services through the Help Desk's Magic software enables us to monitor persistent problem areas and to measure our performance response times. Additionally, we believe that by using the Help Desk you will receive better service and more timely and consistent responses, with fewer things "falling through the cracks."

You can contact the Help Desk by telephone at 1-202-501-2851 or by e-mail at [ORM.Help@ORM.VA.GOV](mailto:ORM.Help@ORM.VA.GOV). [<mailto:ORM.Help@ORM.VA.GOV>](mailto:ORM.Help@ORM.VA.GOV).

## **EEOC Launches Field Office Web Sites**

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) announced the launch of Web sites for each of its 51 field offices on May 1, 2003. You can access this information at <http://www.eeoc.gov/offices.html>. You can view a map showing the location of these offices and get detailed information on individual EEOC Field Offices at this site.



# Office Notes

## **Acting Assistant Secretary for HR&A Named by Secretary**

The Secretary designated Mr. **Eric Benson** as the Acting Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration on May 29th.

## **Little Rock Field Office**

**Ava'Maria Marshall**, EEO Counselor, and **Shalisa Fountain**, EEO Program Assistant, were recently recognized for the assistance they provided to a disabled motorist. While coming back to the office from lunch, they observed a man sitting in his car in the middle of the road. After it was determined that the man was ill, they assisted in removing the motorist from his car. Ava'Maria then administered CPR until paramedics arrived and were able to take the motorist to a local hospital. Congratulations to Ava'Maria and Shalisa for their efforts in assisting this individual.

## **Little Rock Field Office Recognized for Community Service**

The Little Rock Field Office was named *Volunteer of the Year 2003* by the North Little Rock School District for their support of Boone Park Elementary in Little Rock. Austin Lewis, Regional EEO Officer, accepted the award on behalf of the office at a luncheon held on May 20, 2003.

Congratulations, Little Rock, for your outstanding service to your community.

James S. Jones

Deputy Assistant Secretary for Resolution Management

The Little Rock Office held its first "Annual Career Day" on May 14, 2003. The office sponsored an essay, art and poetry "When I Grow Up" contest for 5<sup>th</sup> grade students with their partner school, Boone Park Elementary. Fifteen winners were selected from more than 30 entries. The lucky winners were treated to a day at the office with the staff. A program was planned which included various staff members and items of interest to the students. Judge Willard Proctor, Jr., 5<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court Judge of Little Rock was the special guest speaker. For lunch the staff treated the kids to grilled hot dogs with all the trimmings including homemade cookies. After



lunch the kids shadowed ORM staff members in the office. At the end of the day, the kids were given watches, certificates, gold medals and various other items donated by other organizations within the community. Members of the planning committee included, [Pam Johnson](#), [Ava'Maria Marshall](#), [William Suddeth](#), [Frisco McDonald](#), [Eleanor Kaye Wilson](#), [Michael Fulton](#), [Jo Ann Blackmon](#) and [Charlotte Barr](#).

[Anselm Beach](#), EEO Intake Specialist, received his Masters of Science, Operations Management Degree on May 9, 2003, from the University of Arkansas. Anselm also received certification in Safety & Health Care Management and Human Resource Management.

[Herbert \(Herb\) Grigsby](#), son of Debora Grigsby, EEO Counselor, graduated from Mayflower High School on May 13, 2003. Herb will be attending the University of Iowa in the fall on a football scholarship. Herb is an all around athlete who placed first in Arkansas in the Division AAA 110-meter hurdles on May 16, 2003.

#### **Bay Pines Field Office**

On May 3, 2003, [Diana Ford](#), [Sarah Gilbert](#), [Karen Greene](#) and her husband (Dick), [Mary Ann Leloia](#), [Florine McCall](#), and [Brenda Smith](#), volunteered for the annual City of St. Petersburg, Weed and Seed Family Fun Day. This is an annual event with emphasis on community and family. This event has been adopted by staff at the Bay Pines Office and has become an annual labor of love. Diana's sister Janis Ford is Coordinator for the Weed and Seed Program and extended her thanks and gratitude for the continued support and hard work from these dedicated volunteers.

#### **Office of Policy and Compliance (OPC)**

[Earnestine Richardson](#), EEO Specialist, attended the annual *EEO Symposium* in Washington, DC on May 1 and 2, 2003.

[Elizabeth "Liz" Hawkins](#), EEO Specialist, recently completed the VA Learning Online course entitled *Laws and Ethics in the Workplace*.

#### **Chief Operating Officer Staff (COO)**

[Linda Heard](#), Administrative Assistant, graduated May 18, 2003, from the College of Southern Maryland with a Management Certificate.

#### **Washington Field Office**

[Ronnica \(Ronnie\) Snowden](#), Administrative Support Clerk, will graduate on June 22, 2003, from Strayer University with a BS in Computer Networking.

### Information Technology Support (ITS)

We would like to give a special thanks to **Ricky Rowe**, **Deo Engles**, **Ronald McCullough**, EEO Counselors, and **Michael Fulton**, EEO Assistant, for participating in the ORM IT Refresh Project.

## **Omega Travel Replaces Worldwide Travel**

Effective June 1, 2003, *Omega Travel* replaces *Worldwide Travel* as our travel management system. A real plus to using Omega is that you may contact a travel representative via telephone @ 1-866-263-6616 (7:00am to 7:00pm est.) or 1-800-637-6514 (after hours) or you may go online @ [www.owt.net](http://www.owt.net) to make your reservation.

Contact Barbara Scott at (202) 501-2817 if you have questions concerning the change from Worldwide to Omega.

## **Travel Authorization Form is Available On-line**

Accessing, preparing, and submitting the *Travel Authorization Form* is now easier to do. This form is available on our Learning Resources Web site at <http://vaww.va.gov/orm/ormlr/travel.htm>.

You can request travel by simply filling out the form, on-line, and submitting it electronically. Your request will be sent directly to our travel manager, Barbara Scott. Contact Barbara at (202) 501-2817 if you have questions concerning the use of this form.



## **Travel Voucher Reminder**

Travelers must keep receipts for all lodging, transportation, car rental (if applicable), and miscellaneous expenses of \$75 or greater for a period of 6 years and 3 months after completion of travel. Contact Barbara Scott at (202) 501-2817 for further information.

# Did You Know?

## Women In Military Service for America Memorial



The *Women In Military Service for America Memorial* is the only major national memorial honoring all women who served in our nation's defense throughout history. Their patriotism and bravery are a part of our nation's collective heritage and are finally recognized in the Memorial through exhibits, film, and the Memorial Register, which guarantees each registered woman's individual story a permanent place in America's history. More than two million women have served in defense of our nation, since its beginning more than 220 years ago. The individual histories of nearly 250,000 of these women come to life in the Memorial Register.

Three ORM employees, [Earnestine Richardson](#), [Vanessa Vaughn](#), and [Ronnica \(Ronnie\) Snowden](#) have submitted information on their military service to the Memorial Register. Other women veterans, including those who are part of the ORM family, are encouraged to register to become part of this historical project. For more information on the *Women In Military Service for America Memorial* and to register to become part of this historical project go to <http://www.womensmemorial.org/>.



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